



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the OSCE Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs, Mr. Goran Svilanović

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 27, 2011

The United States thanks the Coordinator for his report on economic and environmental activities since March 2011. Mr. Svilanović, the last few months have been particularly busy for you and your staff. In a very short time span, we have concluded the 19th Economic and Environmental Forum in Prague and have held the inaugural Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting -- the first of many, we hope -- even while the Economic and Environmental Officers in the field continue to do important and excellent work every day.

If I may, I would like to sum up some of the most important conclusions from recent OSCE economic and environmental activities, from the U.S. point of view.

The Prague meeting of the EEF wrapped up a very special Forum process: for the first time in recent memory, we explored not one but two topics, sustainable energy and transport, and did so in a way that facilitated genuine debate and exchange of information. The UNECE report and the panel presentations on energy and transportation efficiency provided ample scope for further dialogue and cooperation on implementing our economic and environmental dimension commitments. We would like to recognize the outstanding efforts of our Lithuanian Chairman-in-Office to put words into action through two draft decisions that draw upon this year's Forum: one on energy security, and one on strengthening the dialogue on transport.

The first-ever Economic and Environmental Dimension Implementation Meeting, which took place here just last week, points to even more possibilities for cooperation and collaboration on meeting all of our EED commitments, as consolidated in the 2003 Maastricht Strategy. The United States notes that there was uniform agreement on the value of conducting such a comprehensive, high-level review of the second dimension, and expects that the EEDIM will become a regular feature of the OSCE annual calendar. I would especially like to highlight the value of providing a platform for the Economic and Environmental Officers to report on their efforts. We do not often get the opportunity to engage directly with them, and it is important to hear the value that the OSCE is providing to citizen and State alike every day.

There is one case in particular I want to highlight here, not to overshadow the work of all the other EEOs and field presences, but because it is a superb example of the OSCE at its best. The Office in Yerevan, under the Civic Action for Security and Environment, or CASE, program, played an instrumental role in defusing tensions between the government and citizens over an arsenic burial site at Alaverdi. These tensions were fueled in part by the lack

of access to reliable information about the extent of the environmental damage and its potential impact on ground water and agriculture. As a result of efforts to increase confidence through transparency and information sharing, the Office in Yerevan succeeded in bringing government and civil society together to address the issue. This is classic OSCE field work: engaging both governments and civil society in order to solve problems and prevent conflict.

Mr. Svilanović, thank you and your staff again for your report and for your contributions to the OSCE's activities. Recent events and activities have highlighted the value of the second dimension to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security, and we will continue to explore possibilities for future action and coordination across all three dimensions. The United States reiterates its support for the work of the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities, and we look forward to further collaboration on the road to Vilnius and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.